Pac Theo Sem
Reading Room

THE PACIFIC

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PACIFIC
Theological Seminary

The Fool's Prayer.

The royal feast was done, the king
Sought some new sport to banish care,
And to his jester cried, "Sir Fool,
Kneel now and make for us a prayer-"

The jester doffed his cap and bells,
And stood the mocking court before;
They could not see the bitter smile
Behind the painted grin he wore.

He bowed his head, and bent his knee
Upon the monarch's silken stool;
His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

No pity, Lord could change the heart
From red with wrong to white as wool;
The rod must heal the sin; but Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!

" 'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep
Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;
'Tis by our follies that so long
We hold the earth from heaven away.

"These clumsy feet, still in the mire,
Go crushing blossoms without end;
These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust
Among the heart strings of a friend.

"The ill-timed truth we might have kept—
Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung!
The word we had not sense to say—
Who knows how grandly it had rung!

"Our faults no tenderness should ask,
The chastening stripes must cleanse them all;
But, for our blunders—O, in shame
Before the eyes of heaven we fall.

"Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;
Men crown the knave; and scourge the tool
That did his will; but thou, O Lord,
Be merciful to me, a fool!"

The room was hushed; in silence rose
The king and sought his garden cool,
And walked apart, and murmured low,
"Be merciful to me, a fool!"

—Edward Rowland Sill.

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GOD'S ROADS.

Vainly we weep and wrestle with our sorrow—
We cannot see His roads, they lie so broad;
But His eternal day knows no tomorrow,
And life and death are all the same to God.
—Celia Thaxter.

IN WHAT MANNER WAS GOD IN IT?

Among the recent interesting discussions in the Monday meeting of the Congregational ministers of San Francisco and vicinity was one on the question as to what extent or in what manner God was in the great calamity which came upon this part of the state on the 18th of April.

The question was not set for discussion, but came up informally. One San Francisco pastor, the Rev. T. R. Earle, remarked in substance: Not many months ago all over our land we observed the annual Thanksgiving Day. We thanked God for the blessings and abundance of the year; we did not push God aside then; but now, after this great calamity, many pulpits are pushing him aside, and in that calamity laymen in general are seeing God much more than the ministers are.

Mr. Earle stated also that very many wicked people were regarding the calamity as a Divine visitation—something much more direct than many ministers were holding it to be, and much more vitally connected with the wickedness of the city. His belief was that the God who was in the abundance which crowned the year 1905 was also in some vital manner in the calamity, and that there was danger that the good to be derived therefrom would be greatly lessened by the attitude of the clergy.

Inasmuch as no topic had been assigned for consideration that day this remark led to a motion that the time be devoted to a discussion of the question thus set forth and that the veteran Chaplain Rowell lead therein

The chaplain expressed himself as surprised that any preacher of the gospel should take the position that God had nothing to do with the calamity which had come with so great severity upon the city by the Golden Gate, and with great though less severity on other cities of the state. He would not say, he stated that it was God's judgment on San Francisco, and yet in some manner God was in it, and in and through it he is rebuking sin; and out of it all there will come better conditions.

The Rev. B. F. Sargent, pastor of Olivet Church, San Francisco, told of Dr. Talmadge's assertion that the great fire in Chicago in 1871 was God's punishment of a wicked city, and of the retort the Chicago papers naturally made when some years later Talmadge's church in Brooklyn went up in flame. Nevertheless, continued Mr. Sargent, we need to remember the words of President McKinley in his dying hours, after he had been struck down by the assassin's bullet, "God wills it!" And in all our talk about natural law it should not be forgotten that such law is but an expression of God's will.

Dr. Pond spoke of the popular present-day doctrine of the immanence of God—God in all things—and expressed himself as unable to understand how God could be ruled out of that calamity. And, "If he had the heart to let it be, he had the heart to make it." It is his conviction that God will bring great good out of it. Reference was made by Dr. Pond to the words of Christ concerning those on whom the tower of Siloam had fallen: "Think ye that they were sinners above all others that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

The Rev. S. C. Patterson, pastor of Bethany Church, was of opinion that God was in the awful calamity indirectly. "This is an earthquake belt, and people are here because they choose to be.". He noted the fact that in and through it a profound impression has been made upon a large number of very wicked people. Many have said in substance: "We're a bad lot, and we deserve it."

All in all it was evident to Mr. Patterson that God had been speaking in a special manner to many.

The opinion of the Rev. B. M. Palmer was that "this is a day of grace and not of Judgment."

Dr. Meserve stated that God does all things good. "He is my Father. No matter what happens to me I can slip my hand into his and say 'my Father.' Jesus negatived the idea of God sending punishment in anger. What God does he does always in love."

The Rev. L. D. Rathbone, in a few remarks toward the close of the discussion, expressed the conviction that the brethren were not far apart; and that in the beginning of every such discussion there ought to be a definition of terms.

The present writer did not say anything, but he had the thought that he had in a few lines of poetry, quoted in The Pacific of May the 10th, expressed in part the truth to be sought. The lines were printed without comment, but they went in with the thought that they contained a great truth for us in our day of calamity. They were:

"Know
That He who gave us life ordained us law.
Law! and is law then but to bind and freeze?
By law the lightning spurts and the earth quakes,
And the spring surges through a million buds;
And law is filled with rushings and with thunder."

The truth in these lines of poetry is this: The law that makes the life to surge in the buds is in a general sense the same law that makes the lightning flash and the earth quake, and that law is ordained and set in operation by God, to whom we owe our existence.

If, then, we see God in the blossoms of the spring time, why should we fail to see him in the lightning and in the earthquake?

A few weeks ago in our Congress in Los Angeles the Rev. Dr. McLean told how God had spoken to him in the lives and words of some of his college associates, and ex-President Brooks testified that the voice of God had come to him with great impressiveness as he sat in the silence of the night by the bedside of a sick child. Robert Browning tells of the little orphan girl Pippa who set out one day in the early morning with no aim except to walk in the sunshine and to sing out the joy which she felt. Pippa passed, and as she passed she sang:

"The year's at the spring, and day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven; the hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing, the snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven; all's right with the world."

And as Pippa passed and sang the poet shows, she became God's own sunshine to many a life that day, interrupting them, rebuking them, inspiring them, bringing them face to face with God.

We all like to think, and we do think, of God's hand being in such experiences as these in human lives.

People are not so ready to see God in the dark things of life as they are in the bright; and yet very many do recognize his dealings with humanity there.

The Scriptures speak of Christ being made "perfect through sufferings."

Shakespeare, one of the profoundest of our poets, says:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewell in his head."

Many there are who can say, out of their own sad experiences, with Newman,

"I would not miss one sigh or tear,
Heart pang, or throbbing brow:
Sweet was the chastisement severe,
And sweet its memory now."

It was Tennyson's belief,

"That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain."

As a people we are fond of talking about the providence of God in our national affairs. And many even in our Southland recognize now that God was with the North helping them and fighting their battles during the years of our civil war. The people of the South did not see it then, nor for some years, but they quite generally see it now. The experience was too terrible for them at the time; but now they see the great good which sprang up in the track of the bloody conflict, and which could not seemingly have come otherwise, and know that they like many other peoples and individuals have been put a little further along on the path toward perfection, through suffering.

Now, we do not believe that we can rule God out of the earthquake and the fire, without ruling him out of the universe. In some manner he was there. In just what manner no finite mind can tell except in part.

Tell in what manner God was in the civil war which struck the shackles from four million bondmen, and which through suffering brought the people of the South to a higher plain of living, and we will tell in what manner he was in the earthquake and the fire through which it is evident some good lessons have come to the world and on the part of some more of an inclination toward right living.

Tell in what manner God was in the sickness which laid a business man upon his bed for weeks, and from whom came the testimony that it was through this that he was brought into right relations with God, and we will tell in what manner he was in the earthquake and the fire.

Tell in what manner God was in the trouble which came upon the Apostle Paul and which sent him in chains to Rome, where it was possible for him to send the gospel out to the remotest bounds of the known world, and which led him to say that the things which happened unto him had turned out unto the furtherance of the gospel, and we will tell in what manner he was in the recent great calamity which came upon San Francisco.

Tell in what manner God was in the wind which sprang up and saved Protestant England from the hand of the Spanish armada and perhaps the whole Christian world from Roman Catholic domination and oppression and persecution, at immense loss and pain and suffering to the people who were at that date the greatest power on the face of the earth, and we will tell in what manner he was in that disaster which has brought almost immeasurable loss and great suffering to the city by the Golden Gate.

IMPRESSIONS AND LESSONS.

It is not possible to tell to how great an extent people have been brought by the recent earthquake and fire to a serious consideration of their manner of living theretofore. Pastors here and there report that more persons sought them out to talk upon religious subjects than for some time previous to the great disaster. One very unique instance of impression on a very profane man in Berkeley has come to light. The man seemed to take delight in being especially profane when a minister who resided in his neighborhood was in his shop to trade. The morning of the earthquake there was an entire absence of profanity and the man even went so far as to remark: "I had never believed in a hereafter, but I do now." Just how the great calamity worked on the man to bring him to a belief in a life hereafter we are unable to explain; but such appears to have been the working of it.

It is very evident that the things which endure only for this life never seemed so valuless to people as they did for two or three days after the earthquake and while the flames in San Francisco were wiping out property estimated to be worth more than three hundred million dollars.

The great temblor which shook the earth so savagely shook also other foundations on which our people were standing and life from that day has not been with them what it was theretofore. There are men and women living hereabouts who will never again build their lives on the foundations of money and worldly success as they once were building them.

These are not of that class which thought that the end of the world had come and that all were about to be summoned before the final judgment bar of God—and who so indicated by their emotional actions, but calm, unemotional people, who thought soberly, seriously, deeply, as they stood powerless before that tragic scene.

The lessons learned in those three days of continuous calamity will never be forgotten, and no life hereabouts can be just what it was before the 18th of April 1906.

But lessons have been learned not only here, but all around the world. Everywhere men and women, as the wires flashed the news all over the world—the news that San Francisco had been terribly shaken by an earthquake, that hundreds of lives had been wiped out instantly, and that the city was being destroyed by fire—everywhere men and women paused and thought as they had never thought before.

A voice came after the earthquake and the fire, and it spoke impressivley. Not all will profit by the impressions and lessons of those days; but many will, and only when we see in the added light of the other world shall we be able to measure to any great extent the fruitage therefrom.

AFFLICTION.

Count each affliction, whether light or grave,
God's messenger sent down to thee. Do thou
With courtesy receive him; rise and bow,
And, ere his shadow pass thy threshold, crave
Permission first his heavenly feet to lave,
Then lay before him all thou hast. Allow
No cloud of passion to usurp thy brow
Or mar thy hospitality, no wave
Of mortal tumult to obliterate
The souls marmoreal calmness. Grief should be,
Like joy, majestic, equable, sedate,
Confirming, cleansing, raising, making free;
Strong to consume small troubles, to command
Great thoughts, grave thoughts, thoughts lasting to the end.

—Aubrey de Vere.

CHANGED.

San Francisco will never be just what it was before the 18th of April. A new era dates from that memorable day.

Many of the changes already wrought out have been for the better, and many yet to be will be for the better also.

Among the changes over which Christian people are rejoicing are those which relate to the liquor traffic. Through the timely action of Mayor Schmitz who saw what the interests of the city demanded and who manfully issued an order for the immediate closing of the saloons, and who stood courageously by the order in the face of all opposition, the whole civilized world has had a grand object lesson on the evils of the liquor traffic, and on the good to mankind in general from such protection as a "no saloon" enactment can afford. In all this the Christian world has rejoiced and will rejoice.

Growing out of this came the conviction on the part of the mayor and of many others that the time had come for such decisive action as would curtail somewhat this traffic in San Francisco. Accordingly it has been enacted that the saloons shall hereafter pay a license of $500, instead of $84, as heretofore; and that they shall not any longer be run in connection with groceries. This is far short of what ought to be; but it is a step in the right direction. It will do good, and will in all probability lead later to action through which will come greater good.

The saloon power has been considerably weakened in San Francisco; and for this we thank God and take courage.

That tribute is due for this to Mayor Schmitz is evi-

dent, and we are glad that some Christian people have taken occasion to congratulate him personally on his courageous stand. One day not long ago as the Rev. Dr. Adams, pastor of the First Congregational Church of San Francisco, was walking in the city, he saw the mayor on the opposite side of the street; he passed over, took the mayor's hand, said "God bless you, sir!" and thanked him for what he had done and was doing. Tears came into Mayor Schmitz's eyes; his voice trembled, as he expressed his gratification in that the discharge of what he regarded as his duty in those trying hours had brought to him such kind greetings. And as the clergyman and the mayor stood and talked, the latter said: "It was nothing but the grace of God that stopped that fire where it did stop; we were powerless."

Changed? Yes San Francisco is changed; and she will change more and more as the years roll on. We are dating everything now from "the earthquake and the fire." Somehow, no one can get away from it and do otherwise We shall in the future date more things than we now realize from that day.

We do not need to know in what manner God was in the earthquake and the fire. Already we know as the Apostle Paul knew when he lived in chains at Rome that the things which have happened unto us have fallen out unto the furtherance of the gospel.

Thus saith the Lord: "I will overturn and overturn until he come whose right it is."

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains. From whence does my help come? My help cometh from Jehovah who made heaven and earth."

BE LIKE THE BIRD.

What matters it though life uncertain be
To all? What though its goal
Be never reached? What though it fall and flee,
Have we not each a soul?

Be like the bird that on a bough too frail
To bear him, gaily swings;
He carols though the slender branches fail—
He knows that he has wings.

—Victor Hugo.

WHY I LOVE THE PACIFIC.

W. N. Burr.

No doubt there are other families in the world as good as mine—possibly some are better. It may be there is another man somewhere in the world who loves his wife and boy as much as I love mine. But I do not love his wife and boy as much as I love my own, and I ought to be hung if I did.

I love The Pacific because our relationship is very close. The Pacific is a member of my family, and a little more closely related to me than even The Congregationalist or The Advance. They are brothers of mine, splendid brothers, too, both of them. I am very proud of them. The Congregationalist is a substantial, business-like sort of fellow in comfortable circumstances—a good Christian who takes a deep interest in the affairs of the Kingdom. The Advance is a big-hearted, sunshiny chap, with a sort of Oliver-Wendell-Holmes rolick in his blood, who is a good Christian, too, and works for the Kingdom with all his cheerful might. But one's own brothers stand an inch or two behind one's own wife and boy, surely so when one lives with wife and boy on the Pacific Coast, and his brothers live in Boston and Chicago. I love The Pacific because its relationship to me is even closer than the relationship of my own brothers to me. It is hand to hand with me in my work, my interests, right here where I live and serve on my home ground.

Now, it will be easy enough to see why I love The Pacific more than I love the Christian Herald. The Christian Herald is a dear, good, useful, benevolent, sweet-spirited old maid. She goes about doing good, and she does a great deal of it. She comes to my house every week, and we have good times together for she keeps herself pretty well posted on all sorts of odds and ends in the work of building up the Kingdom, and she gives me mighty inspirations sometimes. But good as she is, she is not my own, as are my wife and my boy. She is not anybody's. Yes, she is everybody's if everybody wants her, but she belongs to nobody in particular. She is just a dear, good, pious maiden lady, full of good works, but with no close family ties. But The Pacific is my own, and so, of course, I love The Pacific as I can never love The Christian Herald.

And because The Pacific is my own, I love it as I cannot love The Outlook. The Outlook is a sort of President Roosevelt. What a splendid man he is! Was there ever another like him! It makes one's heart-beats quicken just to think of him—stout-hearted, clear-headed master of affairs that he is. But President Roosevelt is not my own, as my wife is my own, and as my boy is my own. So The Outlook. It is a tower of strength, with a marvelous grip on the great affairs of the world, and the very sight of it has come to be an inspiration to me, though some people think it has its weaknesses. Perhaps it has, so has President Roosevelt his weaknesses, no doubt. But the strength, the wideness of vision, of both the President and The Outlook appeal to me. However, they are neither of them my own.

But The Pacific is mine. Its relationship to me, a member of the Congregational family, doing my work for the Kingdom on the Pacific Coast, is a closer relationship than that of any other publication in the world. The more I think about all this the more I feel that I ought to be hung if I am not loyal to my own Pacific.

Corona, Cal.

NOTES.

Our readers may expect The Pacific to be late in reaching them each week for a few weeks yet. We tried to install a second hand press. It was a failure. A new press will be here from the East in a few weeks. In the meantime we shall have to get our press work done at such times as other busy offices can accommodate us.

The church at Everett, Washington, has called the Rev. Dr. L. L. West, a popular preacher for many years in the Middle West. Word which comes to us from Everett shows that it was with great reluctance that they gave up the idea of the return to them of the Rev. J. R. Knodell and Mrs. Knodell. The Rev. Mr. Burgess who spent three Sundays in Everett recently tells of a remarkable work done by the church at that place during the fifteen months that it was under the leadership of Mr. Knodell. It is not surprising that it is with much pain to both the retiring pastor and the people that their working relations have to be severed. It is to be hoped that Dr. West will accept the call. There is a fine opportunity before the church at Everett, and Dr. West will lead them ably and consecratedly if he should decide to enter upon the work. Some of our readers will remember Dr. West as the one who was called to the pastorate of Plymouth Church, San Francisco, just after the Christian Endeavor convention was held here in 1897, and who after some deliberation declined the call. Dr. West was one of the popular speakers at the C. E. convention that year.

Never was The Pacific more appreciated than it has been during the last two months. Its value has been seen very plainly. We have faith that good will come to it out of the earthquake and the fire, although it suffered heavy loss both directly and indirectly. We shall get it back to its former size, but not for a few weeks yet. However, there should be no hesitation about sending in church news. Room will be made for all that is sent.

"In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot;
In men whom men denounce as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
I hesitate to draw the line
Between the two, when God has not."